Results of Round Table Conferences on strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions

4259. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the seven Round Table Conferences have been held on strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the progress made in each of the Round Table Conferences;

(c) whether any consensus has been reached among the States in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the action is proposed to be launched?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) In the seven Round Tables, 18 dimensions of Panchayati Raj were discussed and 150 recommendations were made. These recommendations were adopted at the meeting of the Ministers of Panchayati Raj unanimously to make PRIs true institutions of self-government. The subjects discussed in each of the Round Table Conferences were as follows:-

Sl.No.	Round Table Conference	Subject discussed
1.	First Round Table at Kolkata held on 24-25 July, 2004. (18 resolutions passed)	(i) Effective devolution of functions (ii) Effective devolution of functionaries (iii) Effective devolution of finances (iv) Gram Sabha
2.	Second Round Table at Mysore held on 28-29, August, 2004 (26 Resolutions passed	(i) Planning (ii) Implementation (iii) Parallel Bodies
3.	Third Round Table at Raipur held on 23-24 September, 2004. (10 resolutions passed)	(i) The Provision of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) (ii) Reservations for women (iii) Reservation for Scheduled Castes and ScheduledTribes
	Fourth Round Table at Chandigarh held on 7-8 October, 2004. resolutions passed)	(i) Panchayati Raj in Union Territories (ii) Panchayati Raj Jurisprudence

Sl.No.	Round Table Conference	Subject discussed
5.	Fifth Round Table at Srinagar held on 28-29 October, 2004 (6 resolutions passed)	(i) Annual Reports on the State of the Panchayats (Including preparation of a 'Devolution index).
6.	Sixth Round Table at Guwahati held on 27-28 November, 2004. (26 resolutions passed)	(i) Elections (ii) Audit
7.	Seventh Round Table at Jaipur held on 17-19 December, 2004. (23+27=50 resolutions passed)	(i) IT enabled e-governance (ii) Capacity Building & Training

The Action Points (resolutions) emerging from these Round Tables were put together in a compendium which was adopted by consensus at Jaipur and subsequently circulated to all Chief Ministers and Governors/Lt. Governors, of UTs.

In order to give impetus to the implementation of the above recommendations, a Committee of Chief Secretaries and Secretaries of the Panchayati Raj, under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Panchayati Raj and a Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, have been set up. The Committee of Chief Secretaries and Secretaries of Panchayati Raj met on 11 April 2005. During this Meeting, the implementation of the recommendations of the seven Round Tables was reviewed. State Governments/UT Administrations were told that each of the 29 subjects in the Eleventh Schedule are required to be broken into activities to be performed by different tiers of the panchayats, keeping in view the functions required to be performed by them. They were requested to indicate the progress made in this regard as activity mapping is essential for devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to the PRIs.

It was also stressed that the recommendations relating to Gram Sabhas are to be implemented as the empowerment of Gram Sabhas is imperative for a vibrant grassroots democracy as envisaged in the Constitution. Their attention was drawn to the resolutions of the second Round Table that wherever they had not already been set up, DPCs should be constituted by the end of Financial Year 2005-06. All DPCs should be constituted in accordance with the provisions of Article 243 ZD of the Constitution.

Regarding Plan Implementation, State Government representatives were asked to indicate the progress as to whether schemes had been entrusted to Panchayats for implementation in accordance with the provisions of

Article 243G. They were asked to indicate the role of Gram Sabha in implementation of schemes and also to indicate the programmes to be entrusted to Panchayats in future. participants from States having Scheuled V Areas were requested to indicate the progress in regard to implementation of PESA.

States were requested to send their Annual Reports on the State of Panchayats in accordance with the recommendations of the fifth Round Table to enable Government of India to prepare its Annual Report. Regarding the Training, Guidance and Supervision (TGS) model of audit, Secretary informed them that C&AG had requested the Ministry to take up this matter with the State Ministers to expedite the acceptance of TGS model so as to streamline Panchayat Accounts and Audit in conformity with the recommendations of the fifth Round Table. He also requested them to indicate the action taken on capactiy building and IT enabled e-governance. The States/UT Administrations thereafter made their presentations about the action taken in regard to the conclusions reached during the seven Round Tables. It was found that the progress made in regard to activity mapping, which is a critical trigger for the transfer of funds, functions and functionaries to Panchayats, is a mixed one. Some States have completed it and some have taken a fair amount of action to the extent of holding consultations with various Departments or formulating the proposals for approval of the State Government. They were informed that completion of activity mapping by States would strengthen the hands of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to persuade other Ministries of the Government of India to also undertake activity mapping for allocation of funds to different tiers of Panchayats. They were advised that they should have completed activity mapping by now. However since the exercise had not been completed, it was decided that activity mapping should be completed by the end of 1st quarter of the current financial year *i.e.* 30.6.2005. In respect of DPCs, most of the participants expressed the view that DPCs are not functioning in the manner envisaged in the Constitution. The States were informed that the strengthening of DPCs and improvement in their functioning is absolutely critical for the formulation of the Eleventh Five year Plan which is intended to be actually consolidation of State plans, which in turn emanate from districts. About Prallel Bodies, States reported that there was confusion regarding Parallel Bodies particularly DRDAs. This confusion, however been overcome by several States by merging DRDAs with ZPs. The meeting felt that other States can also adopt this mechanism without any difficulty. On the subject of State Finance Commissions, States were told that in many States the reports of Second SFCs have been under

consideration for too long. The acceptance of these Reports needs to be expedited. Further, much of the fiscal devolution recommended by SFCs is on paper. Actual physical transfer of funds is much lower as compared. This situation need to be remedied. In the area of capacity building and IT, it was indicated by many States that steps have been taken to improve the capacity of Panchayati Raj functionaries. States were told that there were several good practices emerging from States which are conventionally not known to be the champions of Panchayati Raj. A basket of best practices could be built up and made available to States which have every intention to go forward on Panchayati Raj but need assistance in the transitional stages. The meeting of the Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj is scheduled to be held in August/September, 2005. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also initiated a process of meetings and visits to review the progress in implementing these recommendations. These steps will continue through 2005-06 and subsequent years with sectoral Conferences. The Union Minister has begun visiting all States/UTs to review progress on the ground and flag important issues requiring further progress. The first such visit was to Karnataka between 29 April, 2005 and 1 May, 2005. The joint Statement of conclusions signed by the Chief Minister of Karnataka and the Union Minister is annexed.

Statement

Joint Statement of conclusions arrived at after the visit of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and Petroleum and Natural Gas to Karnataka on the 29th April and 1st May, 2005

Karnataka has championed the noble cause of empowering Panchayats and devolving powers to them since decades. 'The State has been at the forefront of the empowerment of all three levels of Panchayats so that they function as institutions of local self-Government in the letter and spirit of Part IX of the Constitution. The recent measures of the Karnataka Government stand testimony to its sustained support to Panchayati Raj reform. The amendments made to the karnataka Panchayati Raj Act in October, 2003 and the subsequent steps taken to strengthen the Grama Sabha; create and empower Ward Sabhas; complete Activity Mapping; and rationalize and simplify schemes entrusted to the Panchayats are examples to be emulated countrywide'. The monitoring of the actualization of devolution by the Legislative Committees is a significant step in the strengthening of Panchayats in the State. The entrustment of schemes by the State Government to Panchayats in the current year's budget is a giant step forward in matching the functional transfer with funds. Through

this process, the Panchayats now handle in excess of Rs. 3500 Crores of Plan funds per year. However there is a need to both substantially increase the quantum of funds available at each level of Panchayats and to untie the bulk of these funds.

A fresh national impetus has been given to the devolution of powers and responsibilities through the Seven Round Tables of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj which arrived by consensus, at 150 recommendations pertaining to 18 dimensions of Panchayati Raj. Karnataka has initiated implementation of 77 of the 106 recommendations of the Round Tables that pertain to it. The Government of Karnataka will address itself with all deliberate speed to the remaining recommendations.

- The challenges before Karnataka is sustaining the pace of reform will require effective support and close coordination with the Central Government. In this endeavour the State Government of Karnataka and the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj have agreed to accord priority to the following points.
- Karnataka has devolved through legislation all the 29 matters in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution to the Panchayats. This functional transfer has been further clarified through an Activity Mapping framework, issued in August, 2003. This has been followed by the entrustment of all schemes pertaining to the activities devolved upon Panchayats to the respective levels, in the State Budget of 2005-06. In the letter and spirit of Article 243 G of the Constitution, the Government of Karnataka commit itself to following up the devolution of functions and funds with the matching devolution of functionaries.
- For Panchayats to effective plan and implement the functions that have been devolved upon them it is necessary that funds pertaining to these scheme are transferred to them without delay or diversion. Karnataka has already shown the way by putting in place a Bank transfer mechanism for transferring funds to Gram Panchayats. In continuation of this reform process, it agrees to put in place systems that the capable of tracking transfers of funds to Panchayats.
- The Government of Karnataka will consider the establishment of a cadre of administrative and technical staff exclusively for PRIs.
- Karnataka has recently conducted elections to the Gram Panchayats and is due to conduct elections to the Taluk and Zilla

Panchayats shortly. A new set of elected representatives have assumed office. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj shall assist the Government of Karnataka in capacity building and training of these representatives.

- In order to build capacity and leadership among categories for whom seats are reserved, Karnataka shall consider favourably the slowing down of the reservation cycle so that the option to reserve seats for more than one-term is open but it is for the State Legislature to decide the number of terms for which seats will remain reserved.
- The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj will pursue the devolution of Central funds through united block grants, and systemic reform of Centrally sponsored Schemes, including the establishment of a Panchayat Empowerment Incentive Fund to bring these in conformity with the constitutional provisions for good governance at the district and sub-district levels as set out in Part IX read with the relevant articles of Part IXA.

Non-utilisation of Central funds earmarked for rural development

4260. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large chunk of Central funds earmarked for rural development have not been used because of inability of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to identify different projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the total amount sanctioned or recommended by the Twelfth Finance Commission for Panchayats; and

(d) what will be the method used by the Centre to ensure that PRIs complete the activity mapping within a time bound programme?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Sampoorn Grameen Rozgar Yojana is being implemented by the Panchayats at the three levels of Districts, Block and Village. Resources under the scheme are shared in the ratio of 20:30:50 between District, Intermediate and Gram Panchayats. During the year